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The Journal's Daily Short Story.

Doninthe's Model

By A. M. DAVIES OGDEN

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It was a vanishing day, and Piccadilly was crowded with the throngs pouring into Burlington House. All smart London was there. Gay chat, bright costumes, the latest gossip, everything rather than the pictures, held the attention of those present. So at least it seemed to a slender girl with a clear cut, attractive face who strolled slowly from picture to picture, lingering to study one here and there, promising herself to come again when there were fewer people.

Then suddenly a little cry escaped her parted lips. Was it possible? She was back in Llandudno again. There was the Irish sea dancing in the sunlight, the green curve of the Great Orme, and surely—surely that figure in white, gazing with shaded eyes out across the water, was herself. Bending closer, she gazed eagerly at the picture. Yes, the face was hers. To a casual passerby perhaps the likeness might not be striking, but to her—the pose, the dress—everything spoke eloquently. How could it have happened? Hurriedly consulting her catalogue, she found the picture. "Hope" it was called, and the artist's name Ralph Lawrence Doninthe. She knew no one of that name.

Slipping into a seat near by, she stared at the picture. Was she really like that? A voice from behind caught her attention.

"It certainly was a great piece of luck to have it accepted. No, I don't know the model's name. I saw her last summer and painted the picture largely from memory. I could never find out who she was and never dared speak. I think I would be bolder now. And somehow I have the feeling that she lives in London."

His friend laughed.

"You expect to meet her in the street, then? And what would you do—just go up and ask her to dine?"

"Perhaps," retorted the artist seriously. The girl, half rising from her seat, hastily pulled off her gloves and drew a ring from her finger, then, after a moment's hesitation, replaced it and turned. The artist was standing alone, his friend having strolled to another part of the room. She lifted tranquil eyes.

"I will accept your kind invitation to dinner with pleasure," she said distinctly. The man, his face flushing, sprang forward.

"You?" he stammered. "You?"

"But we will have to go at once, for I must not be out late," she went on calmly. With an effort the man pulled himself together.

"I am indeed honored," he said, with a bend of his head.

As in a dream he led the way from the building, the girl talking unconcernedly as though it were the most natural thing in the world, and it was not until they were seated at a little table overlooking the busy Strand that he dared draw a long breath. "You'd

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she vanish away? The girl leaned back and looked at him.

"And will you please tell me why you did it," she asked—"why you painted my picture in the first place and why you exhibited it in the second?"

His face clouded.

"I hope you are not vexed. But I could not help painting it. To me last summer you seemed the very spirit and incarnation of youth and joyousness. And then, in fear and trembling, I sent it in, hoping, fearing, longing, that through it and somehow I might find a clue, a trace. Judge, then, of my joy when it was accepted. And was I not right?" he cried triumphantly.

"Are we not here—together?"

The girl was again slowly pulling off her gloves; his eyes, following her movements, fell upon her left third finger, with its single diamond. The girl nodded.

"Yes," she said, "it's an engagement ring, but because I was interested in the picture I came. It is not likely that we shall ever meet again, so for tonight let us be friends. Tell me all about yourself, your ambitions, your plans," watching him with bright, sympathetic eyes. "I will be glad to listen."

Doninthe sighed.

"There is not much to tell. I have worked and studied and succeeded a bit, as you see, and now I have managed to get to London. Since the finishing of the portrait I have been toiling over studies for the competition under Sir Anthony Frewell. This morning I was most keen about it; now—his gaze again resting upon her ring. The girl's eyes widened.

"Sir Anthony Frewell! You mean the president of the academy?"

"Yes. I am asked to a big reception there tomorrow night, but I doubt if I go. I am not much in the society line. Now I have told you all. Will you not in return give me some knowledge of yourself?" he begged. The girl hesitated.

"I am a very unimportant person. I am sort of a companion—yes, companion—to an elderly gentleman, and—

and I do not know when I shall be married," glancing at the ring. "It is because the gentleman is dining out that I am free tonight. So do let us enjoy it. Ah, here comes our dinner. You will have soup?"

The long English twilight was still lingering when the two issued from the restaurant. The artist, at her request for a hansom, drew his breath sharply.

"And am I really never to see you again?" he demanded. The girl lifted uncertain eyes.

"Is it not best?" she asked. And after a moment he answered to their mutual appeal.

"You are right. It is best," she said steadily. The girl's face cleared.

"And—and you will go on and work, make yourself famous," she insisted. "Attend Sir Anthony Frewell's reception tomorrow night."

"If you wish it. And now goodbye. Give the man your own address. I will not listen. And if ever I do accomplish anything remember that it is first of all due to you. Goodbye."

As Doninthe next evening entered Sir Anthony Frewell's house the blaze of lights and sounds of music fairly dazzled him. At the announcement of his name the "R. A." shook him warmly by the hand.

"I am glad to meet you," exclaimed the great man cordially. "Your work shows remarkable promise, and I think it likely—yes, very likely—that yours may be the prize design in our competition. My little daughter tells me that she has already met you," he continued. "She is not 'out' yet, but begged so hard to be allowed down tonight that I finally consented. You know, these motherless girls usually have their own way," with a smile.

But the artist hardly heard. He was watching a girl, the back of whose head looked oddly familiar. As if conscious of his gaze, she turned, then came slowly forward. Sir Anthony patted her hand.

"This is my madcap, and she does not deserve to be here after the naughty way in which she ran off from poor Miss Finch yesterday."

The girl, her mouth curling mischievously, glanced up at the artist.

"I certainly played truant," she admitted. "Come, Mr. Doninthe, can I not present you to some of these pretty girls?"

Doninthe, doggedly persistent, drew her into the conservatory.

"Why—why did you do it?" he demanded. Miss Frewell laughed.

"Because I pleased and because—I knew you all the time and—wanted to see if I would like you."

"And you decided—coming dangerously close. The girl's breath quickened.

"I—I haven't decided yet," she responded lamely. Doninthe, touching the now ringless hand only half concealed by its lace mitt, gazed inquiringly.

"And this?" She had the grace to flush.

"That was my chapman. It is an engagement ring, my mother's, which I always wear, though not always on that hand."

Doninthe's clasp tightened.

"Ah, and when you have decided about me, when the success that seems about to be achieved shall have definitely crowned my work, may I, dare I, hope that you will wear another ring—mine?" He was holding both hands now unrebuked and bent lower to catch her answer. "May I put one on the proper finger, dear?" The girl, her lashes fluttering, dropped her head.

"Perhaps some day," she whispered.



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Increase during 1904, \$29,000,000.	
Assurance Fund and all other liabilities,	332,000,000
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Increase during 1904, \$5,000,000.	
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